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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Child Protection Improvements Act Receives Summer Push

Senator Emphasizes Timely Need for Bill Allowing Background Check Access for Youth-Serving Organizations

Indianapolis, IN (June 3, 2014) — As summer approaches, [Senator Charles Schumer](#) (NY) announced on Sunday that he is “putting on full court press” to pass the Child Protection Improvements Act. The bill (S.1362 & H.R. 3902) will finally close a loophole in the federal law that prevents youth-serving organizations, such as camps, from gaining access to federal criminal background checks on new employees and volunteers. The bill is enthusiastically supported by the American Camp Association® (ACA), and on hand at the event was American Camp Association, New York and New Jersey’s executive director Susie Lupert.

This bipartisan bill expands and makes permanent a background check pilot program created in the PROTECT Act of 2004. The bill allows youth-serving organizations access to timely, inexpensive, fingerprint-based checks of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s criminal records database. As participants in the pilot program, ACA is encouraged by the Senator’s call to move the bill swiftly through Congress.

Under the pilot program, of the nearly 90,000 checks conducted, 6.1 percent returned with records that deemed applicants unfit to work with children. Forty percent of these were convicted in another state, meaning only a national search would have caught the criminal record. A significant number of these individuals showed a different name on their record than the one they used to apply.

American Camp Association

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"As a constant advocate for child safety, ACA supports passing legislation that provides access to vital information that can help keep our children safe," said Peg Smith, ACA's chief executive officer. "By allowing access to the FBI database, youth-serving organizations will be able to get timely, accurate, and affordable background checks on staff and volunteers."

"Children deserve all the safety precautions that are possible," says Susie Lupert, executive director of the American Camp Association, New York and New Jersey. "That is why it is imperative that youth organizations that serve children, such as camps, have access to the FBI database, which will allow for thorough background checks of employees who may potentially be working with children."

The safety of our nation's children is paramount. ACA thanks Senator Schumer and his counterparts in the House, Representatives Adam Schiff and Mike Rogers, for their dedicated work on this important issue. [ACA is calling the youth-development community to action](#) to advocate for swift passage of the bill.

ACA partners with other youth-serving organizations to support this legislation, including the Afterschool Alliance, America's Promise Alliance, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Camp Fire USA, Communities in Schools, Inc., First Focus, GLSEN — the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, National Collaboration for Youth, and YMCA of the USA.

About ACA

The American Camp Association® (ACA) works to preserve, promote, and enhance the camp experience for children and adults. ACA-Accredited® camp programs ensure that children are provided with a diversity of educational and developmentally challenging learning opportunities. There are over 2,400 ACA-accredited camps that meet up to 380 health and safety standards. For more information, visit www.ACAcamps.org.